DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 229 386 SP 022 313

AUTHOR Della-Giustina, Daniel
TITLE Professional Preparation for Careers in Safety.
PUB DATE [82]
NOTE 9p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Choice; *Curriculum Development; *Employment Opportunities; Higher Education; *Occupational Safety and Health; Prevention; Program Development; *Safety Education

ABSTRACT

There has been a long existing need for individuals with extensive training and concentration in safety studies. The foundation areas upon which a curriculum for training safety practitioners is based should include: (1) trends in accident prevention and control; (2) safety analysis of human and machine tasks; (3) hazard identification and control countermeasures; (4) human and environmental safety factors; (5) safety legislation (standards and compliance); (6) history, philosophy, and psychology of safety; (7) legal and liability aspects of safety; (8) disaster and emergency preparedness; (9) fire protection and prevention; and (10) safety research, measurement, and evaluation. Safety professionals' roles are becoming increasingly more important, and career opportunities are available for them in the government, in business, in educational institutions, and in professional organizations. (JD)

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ED229386

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION FOR CAREERS IN SAFETY

BY

DANIEL DELLA-GIUSTINA, PH.D.
PROFESSOR AND CHAIRPERSON
SAFETY STUDIES DEPARTMENT
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

ENACTMENT BY THE U.S. CONGRESS OF THE HIGHWAY SAFETY ACT OF 1966, THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT OF 1970 AND MORE RECENTLY THE CONSUMER PRODUCTS SAFETY COMMISSION HAS ACCENTUATED A LONG EXISTING NEED OF INDIVIDUALS WITH EXTENSIVE TRAINING AND CONCENTRATION IN SAFETY STUDIES AIMED AT PREPARING STUDENTS TO SERVE AS SAFETY DIRECTORS, COORDINATORS, OR MANAGERS IN EDUCATIONAL BUSINESS, INDUSTRIAL, OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTERPRISES.

AS PROFESSIONALS, WE MUST FIRST, DECIDE WHAT THE FUTURE TRENDS IN SAFETY ARE, AND SECOND, DESIGN PROGRAMS TO ASSURE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCIES WHICH ENABLE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DIRECTION OF COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY PROGRAMS. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND SAFETY PROFESSIONALS ALIKE MUST AGREE WITH STANDARDS AND COMPETENCIES PRIOR TO LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE TO DECIDE THE IMPACT OF SHORT AND LONG RANGE GOALS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUND SAFETY PROGRAMS. THE CURRICULUM SHOULD BE AIMED AT ASSURING THE UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH FOUNDATION AND APPLICATION CONCEPTS EMPHASIZED BY THE CONTEMPORARY SAFETY MOVEMENT. IN ORDER TO ASSIST SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES WITH ESTABLISHING OR IMPROVING PROGRAMS FOR EFFECTIVE ACCIDENTAL LOSS COUNTERMEASURES THAT FAVORABLY EFFECT PERSONNEL AND THE

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ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS WE MUST OBSERVE THESE TRENDS AND WEIGH THE IMPACT.

IF THESE ADMINISTRATORS AND PROFESSIONALS OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY RATHER THEN TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE EXPLICITLY STATED OBJECTIVES THE END RESULT WILL BE PROGRAM FAILURES. TWO FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE ASKED ARE (1) "WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF ANY DISCIPLINE, AND (2) CAN SAFETY CURRICULA MEET THESE OBJECTIVES?" ACCORDING TO SHERWIN SHERMIS, WE MUST SAY "YES" WHEN FOLLOWING THE COMPETENCIES OF AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE. IN HIS ARTICLE "ON BECOMING AN INTELLECTUAL DISCIPLINE" (PHI DELTA KAPPAN NOV. 1972) SHERMIS CHARACTERIZES A DISCIPLINE AS A:

1. RATHER IMPRESSIVE BODY OF TIME-TESTED WORKS
2. TECHNIQUE SUITABLE FOR DEALING WITH THIER CONCEPTS
3. DEFENSIBLE CLAIM TO BEING AN INTIMATE LINK WITH BASIC HUMAN ACTIVITIES AND ASPIRATIONS
4. TRADITION THAT BOTH LINKS THE PRESENT WITH THE PAST AND PROVIDES INSPIRATION AND SUBSTANCE FOR THE FUTURE
5. CONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEMENT IN EMINENT MEN AND SIGNIFICANT IDEAS

ADDITIONALLY, THERE HAVE BEEN MANY TERMS USED WITHIN THE SAFETY DISCIPLINE TO EXPLAIN THE DEFINITION OF SAFETY. THE FOLLOWING STATES THAT "SAFETY IS A DISCIPLINE WHICH DEALS WITH (A) CAUSATION AND PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS, (B) MITIGATION OF ACCIDENT CONSEQUENCES, (C) CARE OF INJURED PERSONS, (D) SALVAGE OF DAMAGED PROPERTY AND (E) PROTECTION OF THE ACCIDENT SITE." THERE ARE OTHER DEFINITIONS TOO

NUMEROUS TO DISCUSS, BUT EACH OF THEM CONVEY THE SAME BASIC INFORMATION.

NATIONWIDE SURVEY

IN 1977, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (NIOSH) CONDUCTED A STUDY KNOWN AS "THE NATIONWIDE SURVEY OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH WORKFORCE" TO PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR ASSESSMENT AND GUIDANCE TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, INDIVIDUALS INTERESTED IN CAREERS IN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH, GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES, FOUNDATIONS - IN SHORT ANYONE WITH AN INTEREST IN MANPOWER NEEDS AND DEVELOPMENT IN THIS FIELD.[1]

THE STUDY DISCUSSED THE EXPECTED ANNUAL RISE OF NEW EMPLOYEES INTO THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH EMPLOYMENT BASE. NEW EMPLOYEES IN THE WORK FORCE ARE AFFECTED BY THE FOLLOWING TWO MAJOR COMPONENTS:

1. GROWTH IN THE OCCUPATION TO MEET INCREASED DEMAND,
2. REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING EMPLOYEES WHO LEAVE DUE TO ATTRIBUTION.[2]

IT IS INTERESTING IN THAT THE STUDY INDICATED AN ANNUAL DEMAND FOR 5,300 OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH-RELATED PERSONNEL BETWEEN 1977-1980, TAPERING OFF TO BETWEEN 3,000 AND 4,400 ANNUALLY THROUGHOUT THE DECADE. THESE DEMANDS FORECASTS MUST BE PLACED IN PERSPECTIVE BY COMPARING THEM AGAINST EXISTING AND ANTICIPATED SUPPLY THROUGHOUT THE FORECAST PERIOD.

WITH THIS DATA, THAN WE SHOULD ASK THE QUESTION -

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING TO DESIGN PROGRAMS FOR THOSE STUDENTS PLANNING A CAREER AS SAFETY PRACTITIONERS? TODAY, WITH MORE YOUNG PEOPLE ENTERING THE WORK FORCE AND MANY CONCERNED ABOUT HUMAN TRAUMA AND ECONOMIC LOSSES RESULTING FROM ACCIDENTAL EPISODES, MANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS SHOULD CONSIDER A CAREER IN THE SAFETY FIELD.

EARLIER, I ALLUDED TO THE FACT THAT THE CURRICULUM SHOULD BE AIMED AT ASSURING THE UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH FOUNDATION AND APPLICATION CONCEPTS AND MUST REPRESENT BOTH TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY THOUGHTS. THE FOUNDATION AREAS SHOULD EMPHASIZE FUNDAMENTALS AND CONCEPTS PERTINENT TO SAFETY WITHOUT GENERAL APPLICATION. THE FOLLOWING WOULD BE SOME OF THOSE INCLUDED IN THE FOUNDATION AREAS:

1. TRENDS IN ACCIDENT PREVENTION AND CONTROL
2. SAFETY ANALYSIS OF HUMAN AND MACHINE TASKS
3. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL COUNTERMEASURES
4. HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY FACTORS
5. SAFETY LEGISLATION (STANDARDS AND COMPLIANCE)
6. HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, AND PSYCHOLOGY OF SAFETY
7. LEGAL AND LIABILITY ASPECTS OF SAFETY
8. DISASTER AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
9. FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION
10. SAFETY RESEARCH, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION.

THE APPLICATION AREA OF SAFETY WILL EMPHASIZE, PRIMARILY, SAFETY PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN THE TRADITIONAL CATEGORIES. SOME OF THE CATEGORIES ARE HOME AND FAMILY SAFETY, DRIVER AND TRAFFIC SAFETY,

COMMUNITY SAFETY, INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND MANY OTHERS.

ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL

THE ROLE THAT SAFETY PROFESSIONALS CAN PLAY IN PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING ACCIDENTS IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT. PRIVATE INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS ARE CHANGING THEIR SAFETY PRIORITIES IN THE WORK PLACE TO CONFORM TO THE SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH NEEDS OF THEIR EMPLOYEES. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS TAKING THE POSITION THAT SAFETY BELONGS IN THE PERSONNEL REALM OF LIVING. IN TERM OF POSITIVE RESULTS, IN 1981 THE NATION HELD ACCIDENTAL DEATHS TO WHAT THEY WERE IN 1980. BECAUSE OF POPULATION INCREASES, THE ACCIDENTAL DEATH RATE NOW IS THE LOWEST IN HISTORY. IN FACT, THERE WERE FEWER THAN 200 MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS (DOWN 4% FROM 1980) AND A SEVEN PERCENT REDUCTION IN PUBLIC AND WORK DEATHS IN 1981.[3] THEREFORE, SAFETY PROFESSIONALS MUST TAKE THE LEADERSHIP IN PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORAL LIFE STYLES AND PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING TO STUDENTS IN APPROPRIATE SAFETY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TOWARD THAT CAREER GOAL.

LEADERSHIP IN THE SAFETY FIELD WILL ALWAYS BE NEEDED. THERE ARE MANY REASONS FOR SEEKING THIS ASSISTANCE WHEN SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT PERSON TO ADMINISTER SAFETY POLICIES, PROCEDURES, RECOGNIZE POTENTIAL HAZARDS AND TO SUPERVISE ENTERPRISE REGULATORY COMPLIANCE WORKER PROTECTION EFFORTS AND OPERATIONAL TECHNIQUES. IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT ANY SUCCESSFUL SAFETY PROGRAM MUST HAVE THE BACKING OF TOP MANAGEMENT. IN FACT, IT IS THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL NATURE OF A SAFETY PROFESSIONAL'S TASK THAT MAKES THE SELECTION PROCESS

SO IMPORTANT. OF COURSE, THOSE WHO CHOOSE THE SAFETY FIELD AS A CAREER WILL FIND THEIR WORK VISIBLE, MEANINGFUL, FULFILLING AND BENEFICIAL TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF ALL PEOPLE.

SPECIALIZATION IN THE EMPLOYMENT FIELD PROVIDES CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SAFETY PROFESSIONALS SINCE HAZARDS AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS VARY ACCORDING TO THE ENTERPRISE, PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES, SIZE OF PLANT AND DESIGN AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE WORKFORCE. THE PROBLEMS AND EXPERTISE OF A CABINET MAKING FACTORY SAFETY MANAGER WILL OBVIOUSLY DIFFER SOMEWHAT FROM THOSE OF A SAFETY SUPERVISOR AT A STEEL MANUFACTURING PLANT. SINCE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS VARY WITHIN EACH FIELD THERE WILL BE A WIDE VARIETY OF EXISTING AND EXPANDING ROLES FOR THE SAFETY PRACTITIONER.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

THE TYPE OF EMPLOYEES CURRENTLY WORKING AND THOSE WHO WILL WORK IN THE FUTURE ARE CHANGING. TODAY EMPLOYEES ARE BETTER EDUCATED, FINANCIALLY MORE SECURED AND HAVE BEEN RAISED IN AN ENVIRONMENT MORE PERMISSIVE THAN WORKERS IN THE PAST. FURTHERMORE, SAFETY PROFESSIONALS MUST BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE, THEIR MOTIVATIONS AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEIR PROBLEMS. SINCE SAFETY POSITIONS CARRY SUCH BROAD RESPONSIBILITIES INVOLVING NUMEROUS TASKS CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SAFETY PROFESSIONALS THAT ARE NUMEROUS, VARIED AND INCREASING.

EXAMPLES FROM THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF GOVERNMENTAL, BUSINESS, EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE:

GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:

DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, POLICE DEPARTMENTS, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR, ARMED SERVICES, TRAFFIC ENGINEERING DEPARTMENTS.

BUSINESS:

INSURANCE CARRIERS, NATIONAL OR STATE SAFETY COUNCILS, TRADE ORGANIZATIONS, PRIVATE CONSULTANTS, RESEARCH LABORATORIES, MANUFACTURING FIRMS, RETAIL AND WHOLESALE BUSINESS, HOSPITALS AND CLINICS, DRIVING SCHOOLS, CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES, LEGAL FIRMS.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS. VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, COOPERATING EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

ALLIANCES, ASSOCIATIONS, FEDERATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, INSTITUTES, SOCIETIES.

THE FACT THAT CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SAFETY PROFESSIONALS ARE CONTINUOUSLY INCREASING AND THE NEED AND DEMAND WILL CONTINUE INTO THE NEXT DECADE IT REMAINS ESSENTIAL THAT A BASIC EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND BE REQUIRED AS A PREREQUISITE FOR ALL SAFETY PROFESSIONALS. WE CANNOT RELAX OUR STANDARDS OR EFFORTS. THESE CARRER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SAFETY FIELD HAVE AND WILL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE HUMAN WELL-BEING AND LOWERING THE COST OF ACCIDENTAL FATALITIES, INJURIES, AND PROPERTY LOSSES.

REFERENCES

1. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health." A Nationwide Survey of The Occupational Safety and Health Work Force," NIOSH (July 1978)

2. Ibid

3. National Safety Council, Accident Facts (Chicago's Safety Council, 1982), pp. 10-16.